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MUIRHOUSE COMMUNITY RESISTANCE AGAINST THE POLL TAX

Summer 1990 Newsletter

REMEMBER

NON-PAYMENT IS EASY!

There are only 3 methods of collecting the poll tax, if you refuse to pay - freezing your bank account; wage arrestment; and warrant sales. ALL these methods of collection can be blocked - the main hope of the council and their sheriff officer friends is that they can scare people into paying. So remember, non-payment is easy!

BANK ACCOUNT FREEZING

They can freeze your bank account - but it is proving very difficult for them. They have to guess which bank you're with, find your branch, find enough money in it, etc, etc.

ADVICE - Move your account to one of the smaller building societies. Open an account under a slightly different name. Tell your bank you've moved to another address.

BENEFIT AND WAGE ARRESTMENT

They can't arrest your wages if they don't know where you work. Don't tell them. Beware of poll tax "counsellors" employed by the social work department who may ask you about your work - they are employed by the people who are trying to get the poll tax off you. Even if they do arrest your wages anyone earning under £200 per week will have less deducted than if they paid the poll tax. You're better off not paying!

The only benefit they can touch is Income Support, and they can only take a small amount off a week. They can't touch any other benefit, and they are so confused and over-stretched that they haven't managed to do ANY benefit arrestments in 18 months. Many DSS workers are against the poll tax, making it more difficult for them to arrest your benefit, and more sensible for anyone on Income Support to just not pay!

ADVICE - Never tell sheriff officers or council-payed "debt counsellors" where you work. Make sure your neighbours don't tell either. If they do arrest your wages or benefit, contact your local anti-poll tax group immediately. Remember, the main point of their very inefficient debt collection is to intimidate you into paying. Don't.

WARRANT SALES

The Labour council are using the threat of warrant sales to try to intimidate people who can't pay the poll tax into paying. Considering they haven't done ANY warrant sales since the poll tax was introduced, it's a bit of an empty threat. As with other methods of collection, the main point is to SCARE PEOPLE INTO PAYING UP. There is absolutely no reason to be scared, as most of the letters are bluff, and if they do attempt ANY warrant sales, there will be hundreds of anti-poll tax protestors there to stop them.

ANTI-POLL TAX ADVICE

We know that practically no one in Muirhouse is paying the Poll Tax. We believe that it is impossible for the Local Authority to collect the Tax. All actions so far against Sheriff Officers in Edinburgh have been successful and will continue to be so if we stick together.

If you are not paying the Poll Tax it is important that you join with your neighbours and friends to prevent the sheriff Officers carrying out successful poindings in your street.

There are only 40+ Sheriff Officers in the whole of the Lothians and many thousands of non payers.
There is already an active anti-sheriffs officers network in Muirhouse Drive, and a Hotline for the whole of Muirhouse. If you want to be part of a similar network in your own street:-
First talk to your Neighbours and friends
then contact
Muirhouse Community Resistance
336 5636
336 2075

STOP PRESS

Muirhouse Community Resistance will be holding regular Anti-Poll Tax advice sessions at
Pidra Court Cafe
from 12.00 - 1.00pm
every Wednesday.
If you are at all worried about Non-payment or just want some friendly advice come along and meet other non-payers. Remember 200 000 non-payers in the Lothians can NOT be intimidated.

Over the page: "Threatening Letters" and How to deal with them

THREATENING LETTERS

LETTER 1 - FROM THE COUNCIL
IF YOU ARE ON REBATE you may have received a final reminder from the regional council advising you to pay in 14 days. It is simply a reminder.

ADVICE - Ignore this letter.

LETTER 2 - FROM SHERIFF OFFICERS
This will tell you that a
"Summary Warrant against you at the Sheriff Court has been passed to this office for Enforcement and Collection. Unless payment in full, as detailed below is received at this office within five days the warrant will be enforced against you without further reference".

This is nonsense. They have sent out 100,000 of these letters in Lothian. They are not going to do anything in 5 days.

ADVICE - Ignore this letter.

LETTER 3 - FROM SHERIFF OFFICERS
Yet another threatening letter.
"Having received no settlement or acceptable payment in response to the Demand Letter for the above noted Community Charge and Statutory Penalty it is now necessary that we proceed with enforcement by pointing and/or arrestment in terms of the Summary Warrant granted against you".

Again, 90,000 of these were sent out, so if you have one, you're not alone! It's just more bullying, trying to scare people into paying up.

ADVICE - Ignore this letter.

LETTER 4 - FROM SHERIFF OFFICERS
This one will say "IMPORTANT NOTICE" at the top, and may well have been put into your hand by one of the sheriff's men. It reads:

"Further to the Summary Warrant granted against you a Sheriff Officer called at your address today for the purpose of executing a Poinding of your effects. As he was unable to gain access the action authorised in terms of Paragraph 3 (1) of Schedule 5 of the Debtors (Scotland) Act 1987 will be implemented. To avoid this Action either payment in full or an acceptable arrangement for payment must be made immediately".

ADVICE - Contact your local anti-poll tax group. If Sheriff Officers appear at your door, don't let them in. Tell them you are a visitor or a babysitter, and that they must write with a date and time of when they are coming again. In any case PHONE YOUR ANTI-POLL TAX GROUP OR THE ANTI-POLL TAX HOTLINE.

LETTER 5 - FROM SHERIFF OFFICERS
This letter will give you a date when they are coming round, and will tell you they areauthorised to break locks to get in.

ADVICE - If you get a letter like this, youshould contact your anti-poll tax group immediately. We can organise people to come to your house and make sure they don't get in. If you are worried you can move things like TVs and stereos out of the house - remember warrant sales can onlbe done on luxury goods - but just having people in the house is usually enough to stop them trying to get in.

BEATING THE POLL TAX!

The Poll Tax is contrived by the government/ruling class to make the working class poorer than it already is. When we are poor we more readily accept crap wages and work/training scheme conditions because we need to, merely to pay for the necessities of life, we are left with NO CHOICE, and certainly little hope of improving the lives of ourselves and our children. On the contrary life gets harder, conditions where we live get worse. Anxiety, despair and crime become more prevalent.
The little we are allocated whether it be a wage or social security benefit is being ruthlessly whittled away - stolen from us - as is our health service (ie the Western General) and access to decent educational facilities. In fact everything that millions of working class people throughout history have worked and fought for is being stolen from us and our offspring. The ruling class want us scrabbling around against each other for what little we can get, desperate to make ends meet in a climate of continually rising prices, fuel bills, rents and taxes. As workers/consumers we are no more than a means of making massive profits for the obscenely rich to stuff into their bulging bank accounts! This is capitalism and it is what both conservative and Labour governments stand for in this so called democracy. The Poll Tax is now the latest large scale offensive on our diminishing quality of life. It's time to show those stupid heartless bastards where to get off. Hundreds of thousands of people have from the very beginning been doing just that - by simply not paying. Many thousands more have joined the campaign of non payment as it has gone along. We recognise safety in numbers. You can stop paying at any stage, the sooner you do the less out of pocket you'll be.

ADVICE SHOP, FIDRA COURT CAFE,
12.00 - 1.00, EVERY WEDNESDAY
OR PHONE 336 5636

UNWANTED

For over two and a half years the Anti-Poll Tax movement has been telling Lothian Labour councillors that sooner or later they would face the choice of setting an unaffordable poll tax or decimating jobs and services. Now, when they are going to set a poll tax of over £500 and cut jobs and services, they have the cheek to blame those who are refusing to pay this rich man's tax.
*The truth is that the poll tax is high because:
*It reduces the amount of tax paid by the rich and big business
*The Tories have slashed money available to Local Authorities to maintain basic services in order to privatise them.
*The poll tax costs much more to administer than the rates.

We must not listen to the lies of councillors like David Begg and Kelin Geddes or their propoganda in the Evening News. The only way to protect jobs and services is to get rid of the Poll Tax and the quickest way of doing that is to not pay it.